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FAMILY and COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM
A cooperative agreement between Central State University–OH and the Office of Minority Health–DHHS ®

EVALUATION REPORT #2

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1999–2000 FCVP Evaluation Confirms Continued Violence Reduction, Academic Improvement

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Evaluation data gathered by 24 Family Life Centers (FLCs) across the United States during 1999-2000 confirms progress in the reduction of violent behavior and voluntary exposure to violence among minority youth participating in a multi-faceted curriculum developed with support of the Family and Community Violence Prevention (FCVP) Program. Sustained, intensive programming appears to yield the most desirable outcomes, particularly in academic performance and personal development. These results confirm trends first observed in program year 1998-1999.

BACKGROUND

Violence and abusive behavior among children and youth continue to be a major public health problem across the United States. High profile shootings at Jonesboro, Arkansas; West Paducah, Kentucky; Columbine, Colorado; and Santee, California, demonstrate that this disease transcends ethnic and socio-economic status. Researchers have identified certain problems that are often associated with crimes, delinquency, and conduct disorder. These include low academic performance, school dropout, use of alcohol, involvement with drugs, use of weapons, and weak attachments to families or the absence of a cohesive family unit. These problems and deficiencies are often referred to as risk factors.

In response to the high incidence of homicide, serious acts of violence, and other abusive behavior among minority youth during the 1980s and early 1990s, a group of Historically Black Colleges formed the Consortium on Research and Practicum for Minority Male (The Min-Male Consortium) in 1992. The Min-Male Consortium evolved into the Family and Community Violence Prevention (FCVP) Program and has expanded its membership base to include other Minority Serving Institutions.

The FCVP Program has been operated under a cooperative agreement between the Office of Minority Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio. It currently encompasses 24 colleges and universities in 17 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, (14 Historically Black Colleges and Universities, 4 Tribal Colleges, 3 Hispanic Serving

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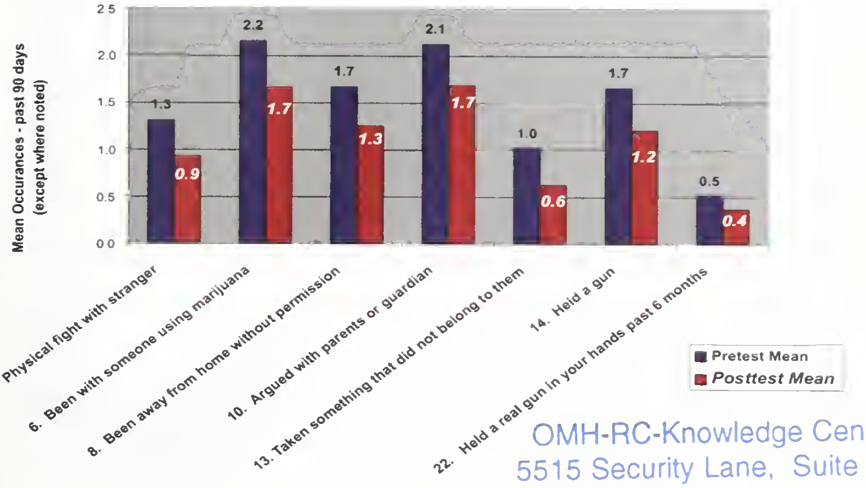
Figure 1:
Change in Violence Risk for Teens with High Initial Violence Risk Scores



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1999–2000 FCVP Evaluation

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Institutions, 2 universities serving Asian/Pacific Islander populations, and 1 other minority institution).

The purposes of the 1999-2000 evaluation were to determine: (1) the effectiveness of the FCVP curriculum on youth's academic performance, school bonding, career development, cultural enhancement (proximal outcomes); (2) the overall impact (distal outcomes) of the curriculum on reduction in violent behavior, thoughts and feelings; and (3) the relationship between the dosage (number of hours experienced by the youth) and the changes observed for both proximal and distal outcomes.

METHOD

Participants included in this evaluation study were placed in two groups— under 12 and 12 and over. They were selected by 18 universities participating in the (FCVP) Program based on the presence of certain risk factors, as measured by the Center of Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) classification.

The FCVP Curriculum

Each FLC was required to offer prevention activities in academic development; personal development, including family bonding; cultural and recreational enrichment; and career development.

Instruments

A combination of proximal (intermediate) and distal (impact) cross-site evaluation instruments were used to collect data from the youth participants. For the proximal outcomes, five separate instruments were employed —the Wide Range Achievement Test, Third Edition (WRAT-3) and the School Bonding Index–Revised (SBI-R) were used to measure academic development, while the Youth Self-Report Inventory (YSR), the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), and the Career Maturity Inventory (CMI) were used to assess

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Figure 2:
Change in Violence Risk or Teens with High Initial Violence Risk Scores

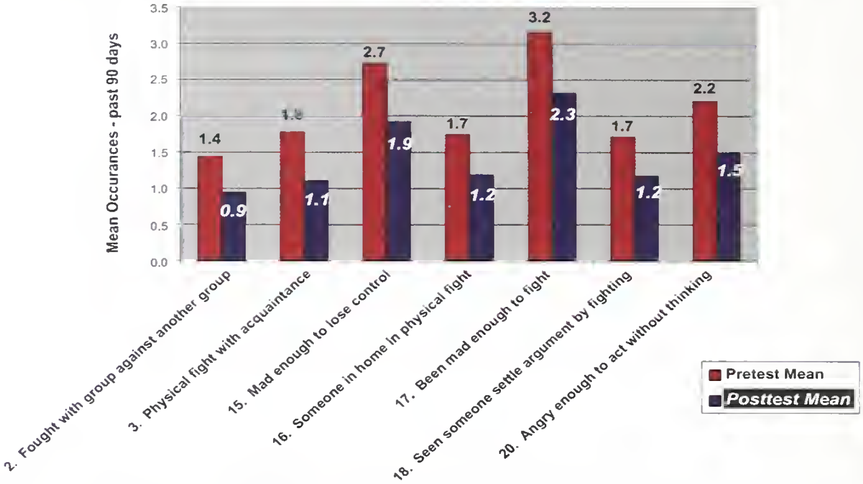


Figure 3:
Academic Test Scores of Youth under Age 12 at FLC #4
(Provided average academic service of 201 hours–41% of all service.

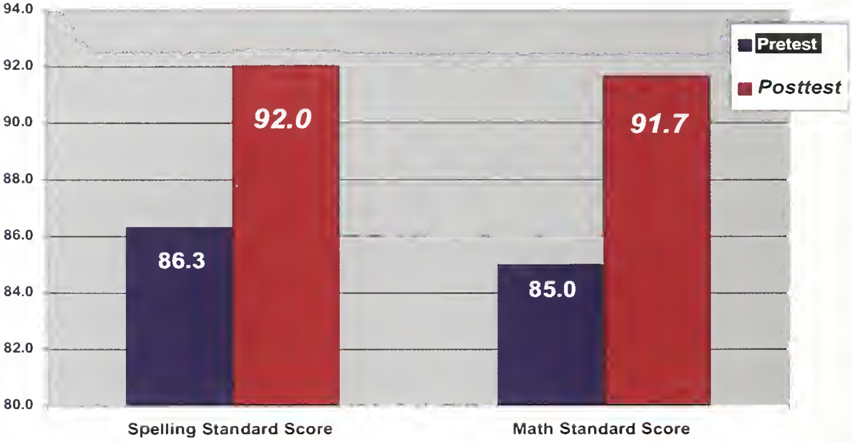
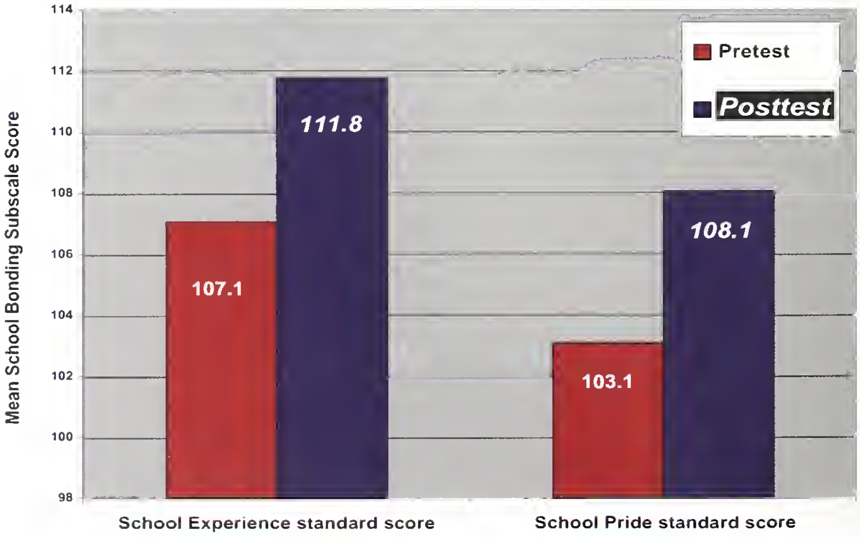


Figure 4:
School Bonding for Youth under Age 12 at FLCs #1 and #2



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personal development, cultural development, and career development respectively. For the distal evaluation, the program used the Violence Risk Assessment Inventory (VRAI) and the Delinquency and Aggressive Behavior subscales of the Youth Self-Report Inventory (YSR).

In addition to the six instruments described above, a demographic sheet, comprised of 14 items, and a dosage form were included in the instrument booklets.

RESULTS

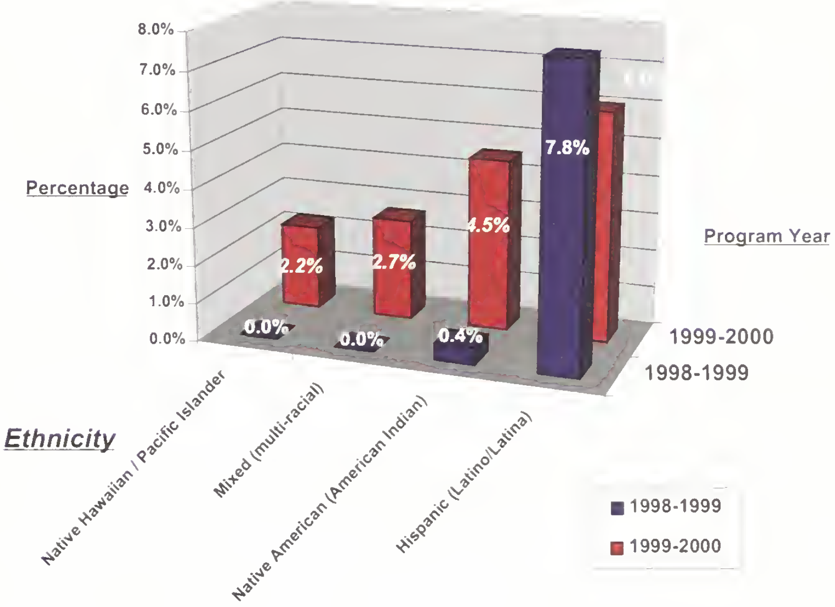
Family Life Centers picked up the pace considerably in 1999-2000 over the previous year. A total of 1,351 youth active in 24 FLC programs successfully completed both pretesting and posttesting to qualify as official participants under FCVP guidelines. This compares with just 890 in 1998-1999, representing an increase of over 50 percent in a single year.

Reduction in Violent Behaviors

Analysis of pretest and posttest results for the Violence Risk Assessment Index (VRAI) collected from the over-12 age group participants indicates that the FCVP curriculum is most effective with those who are considered at higher risk for involvement in violence and abusive behavior. Using a VRAI pretest score of 20 or more incidents as a baseline, the FCVP Program can now demonstrate that 109 teens served by 14 FLCs during the 1999-2000 academic year or the entire program year reported significant declines in violence risk at the time of their last posttest.

Significant reductions (p<.05) in the average number of incidents occurred in physical fighting with strangers, arguing with parents, being away from home without parental permission, stealing, being around drug users and holding a gun (See Figure 1, Page 1). Still more impressive declines (p<.01) came in gang fighting, fighting with acquaintances, losing self-control, being angry enough to act without thinking, exposure to domestic violence, and seeing neighborhood fights (See Figure 2, Page 2, Top).

Figure 5:
Ethnic Diversity 1998–2000



Improved Academic Performance

The 1999-2000 data also confirm earlier findings from the 1998-1999 evaluation that higher prevention dosage (the number of hours participants are exposed to planned activities) is very effective in bringing about desired changes. In terms of academic performance, concentrated attention on traditional academic tutoring, especially with younger children under 12 years old, can produce significant improvement (p<.05) in spelling and arithmetic skills. One FLC whose participants received an average 200 hours of academic instruction (over 40 percent of the total services for a typical child) observed substantial improvement in spelling and arithmetic scores as measured by the WRAT-3 (See Figure 3, Page 2, Middle).

The positive effect of high dosage is also demonstrated by the combined results of two other FLCs that concentrated on offering personal development and esteem-building services to youth. A typical child under age 12 at these FLCs received nearly 140 hours of personal development activities, fully 44 percent of the total average dosage. These efforts appear to have directly contributed to a more positive outlook among grade-school and younger middle-school students regarding their experience in the classroom and the pride they took in their schools. The average scores on the Experience and Pride subscales of the School Bonding Index (SBI) both rose significantly (p<.05) for children in these two programs (See Figure 4, Page 2, Bottom).

Ethnicity

African American participants continue to be the principal group (over 81 percent) being served by the FCVP Program. The non-African American participants accounted for nearly 19 percent of the total population in 1999-2000, compared to 12 percent the previous year.

The benefits of including two FLCs based at Native American Tribal Colleges, a program sponsored by a university in Hawai'i, and one at an Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in Miami, Florida, became immediately

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Figure 6:
Change in Gender 1998-2000

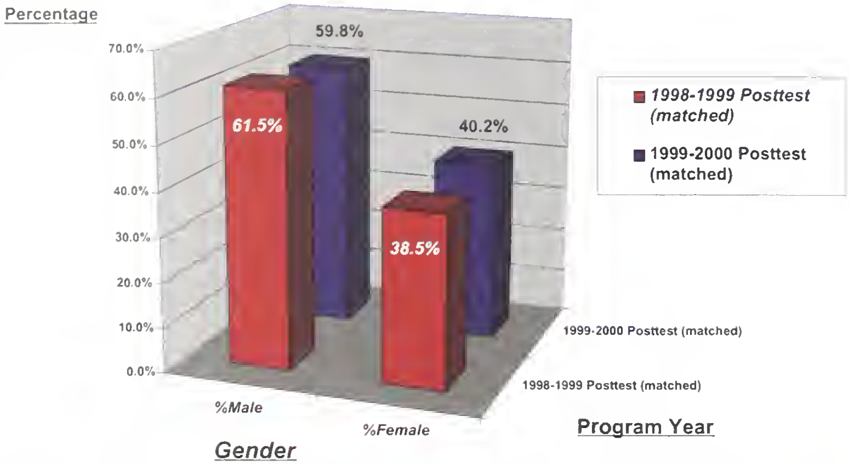


Figure 7:
Participant Contact with Father

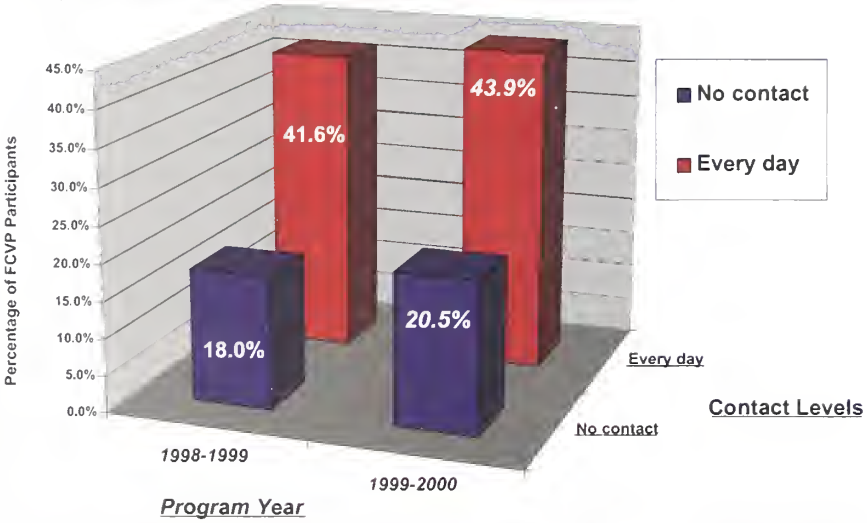
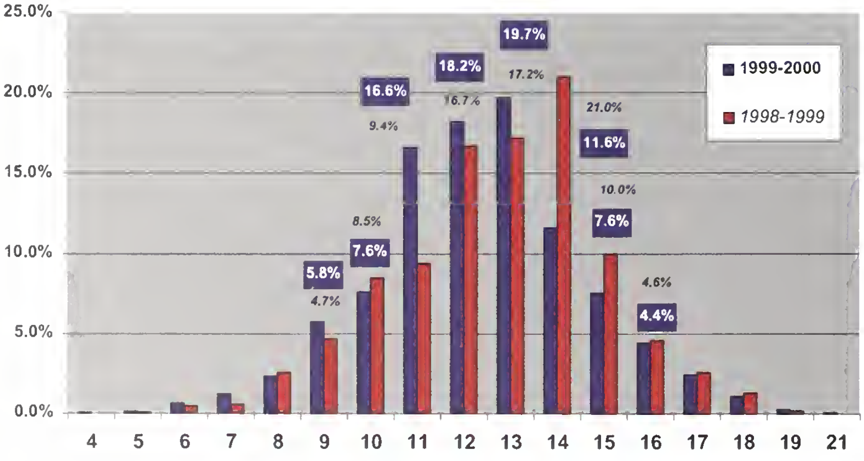


Figure 8:
Age Range of 1999-2000 Participants



1999–2000 FCVP Evaluation

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evident. Native American and Hawaiʻian/Pacific Islander populations rose from near zero to 4.5 percent and 2.2 percent of all youth served respectively. In addition, most of the 2.7 percent of all youth who identified themselves as mixed heritage belonged to the FLC sponsored by the University of Hawaiʻi at Manoa, bringing the total number of youth located in Hawaiʻi to over 4 percent of the total (See Figure 5, Page 3). Nearly 2 percent of all participants identified themselves as having ethnic backgrounds that differed from traditional categories (African American, Indian, Latino/Hispanic, Asian, and white).

Gender

Males accounted for under 61.5 percent of all participants in 1999-2000, compared to 59.8 percent the previous year (See Figure 6, Top, Left). Females continued a slow but steady growth from the period when the FCVP's predecessor, the Minority Male Consortium, served at least 80 percent males in any given year between 1994 and 1997.

Age distribution has proven more volatile, as shown by a strong shift away from teen youth toward younger children in 1999-2000. The average age of a typical participant dropped from 14 to 13 in the past year (See Figure 8, Bottom, Left).

Family Structure

The proportion of youth living in households where their parents are married fell from nearly 38 percent in 1998-1999 to under 35 percent in 1999-2000, while those living with unmarried parents or a separated parent rose. Youth living in two-parent households (nearly 45 percent) barely exceeded those living in single-parent homes (over 43 percent), with the balance (12 percent) held by those living with relatives and friends. In the same period, FCVP participants who had no contact with their fathers rose from 18 percent to 20.5 percent.

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Teen youth (22 percent) were more likely than younger children (nearly 18 percent) to have no contact with their fathers. The same was true for contact with mothers; teens were about twice as likely to have no contact (nearly 4 percent) than younger children (over 2 percent).

Search Begins for Best Practices

In 1999-2000, a small group of Family Life Centers emerged from the pack with particularly striking academic and personal development results. This suggests that certain FLCs have begun to discover and reliably apply methods that may prove to be reproducible in other FLCs and more widely in communities across the country. Evaluation results also revealed that a wider range of FLCs were succeeding with particular subgroups that reported higher incidence of exposure to and involvement in violence.

These outcomes suggest that each FLC needs to review its practices and sharpen its observations of participating youth so that the roots of success can be discovered within current programs, or be introduced from the work achieved by fellow FLCs. This is particularly important for maximizing the number of higher-risk participants, who appear to gain the most benefits from FLC programs, while at the same time identifying and preserving key internal dynamics responsible for producing the best outcomes.

With additional qualitative and quantitative data gathered from local sources, both individual FLCs and the FCVP Management Team should be able to develop explanations that can serve as the foundation for devising best practices and testable models for reducing violence among at-risk children and teens in America.

2000–2001
MEMBER INSTITUTIONS
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY VIOLENCE PREVENTION (FCVP) PROGRAM

Central State University
Wilberforce, Ohio

Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science
Los Angeles, California

Chicago State University
Chicago, Illinois

Florida International University
Miami, Florida

Howard University
Washington, DC

John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY)
New York, New York

Institute of American Indian Arts
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Leech Lake Tribal College
Cass Lake, Minnesota

Little Priest Tribal College
Winnebago, Nebraska

Morehouse College
Atlanta, Georgia

North Carolina A&T State University
Greensboro, North Carolina

Prairie View A&M University
Prairie View, Texas

Sinte Gleska University
Rosebud, South Dakota

South Carolina State University at Orangeburg
Orangeburg, South Carolina

Southern University at Baton Rouge
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

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Talladega, Alabama

Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi
Corpus Christi, Texas

Texas Southern University
Houston, Texas

Tougaloo College
Tougaloo, Mississippi

University of Hawai'i at Hilo
Hilo, Hawai'i

University of Hawai'i at Manoa
Honolulu, Hawai'i

University of North Carolina at Pembroke
Pembroke, North Carolina

University of the Virgin Islands
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

Xavier University of Louisiana
New Orleans, Louisiana

The Power of Program Bonding

Observations made by FCVP Management Team members during recent site visits to a number of Family Life Centers (FLCs) reveal an important positive dynamic that has developed between some FLC staff, youth, and parents which we call "program bonding."

Extensive interviews with participants reflect an unusually strong attachment among youth enrolled in FLC programs which is frequently expressed in terms normally reserved for close family relationships. These youth, many of whom could be classified as "high risk" based on a variety of risk factors, speak of their involvement in FLC programming in highly laudatory terms. They point to their consistent attendance and general enthusiasm as products of fulfilling relationships with FLC staff and a general sense of acceptance by other youth. One enthusiastic participant commented, "(one of the program mentors) is like an older brother to me. With all the mentors and youth, this program is like family. We know just enough about each other to get mad sometimes, but we make up. This is just like family. I figure I can make Black History. People who drop out do it because they think they won't make it, but I will make it."

In spite of past histories of inconsistent involvement in school and other related programs, these youth appear to have received a degree of nurturing and respect from their FLCs that have increased their commitment, often over extended periods of time. The majority of youth fitting this profile in two particular FLCs have been enrolled in programming for at least two consecutive years, and in a few instances for as many as five years. The strength and longevity of "program bonding" is especially remarkable considering that some of these FLCs had little or no curriculum implementation, inadequate staffing, and, in some cases, substandard administrative performance.

The Family and Community Violence Prevention (FCVP) Program is a cooperative agreement between the Office of Minority Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio (D67MP94001-07).

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Stacey Williams-Diggs, OMH Project Officer

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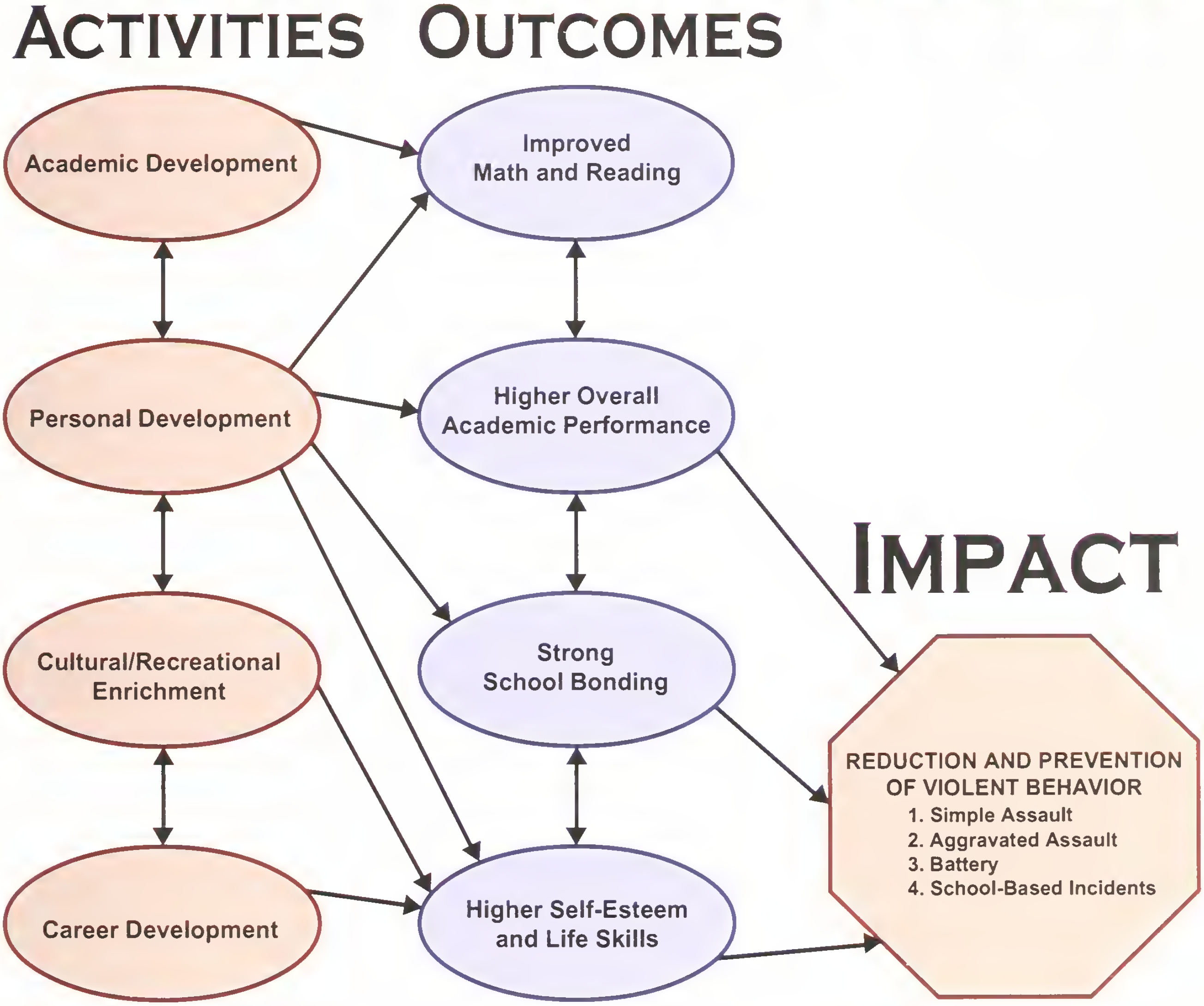
FCVP LOGIC MODEL


ACTIVITIES
OUTCOMES
Academic Development
Personal Development
Cultural/Recreational Enrichment
Career Development
Improved Math and Reading
Higher Overall Academic Performance
Strong School Bonding
Higher Self-Esteem and Life Skills
IMPACT
REDUCTION AND PREVENTION OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOR
1. Simple Assault
2. Aggravated Assault
3. Battery
4. School-Based Incidents

FCVP Family Life Centers Promote Violence Prevention

The immediate goal of the FCVP Program is to positively impact the academic and personal development of a select group of youth who are at risk for involvement in violent and other abusive behavior. To achieve this goal, Family Life Centers conduct activities based on four program components:

Academic Development

The academic development component builds cognitive skills, critical thinking, and scholarship to promote self-esteem and achievement of a higher quality of life.

Personal Development

The personal development component provides activities which promote social, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being for the individual and which promote family bonding.

Cultural and Recreational Enrichment

The cultural and recreational component offers experiences that promote an awareness and appreciation of one's heritage, traditions, values, and norms as well as those of others.

Career Development

The career development component uses activities which promote self-sufficiency through goal setting and the development of skills to enhance career options.

FCVP

Family and Community Violence Prevention Program

A cooperative agreement between Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio, and the Office of Minority Health-DHHS

FCVP Program Overview

The Family and Community Violence Prevention (FCVP) Program was developed in 1994 under a cooperative agreement between the Office of Minority Health (OMH) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Central State University (CSU), Wilberforce, Ohio. The immediate goal of this program is to positively impact the academic and personal development of a select group of youth who are at risk for involvement in violent and other abusive behavior. To achieve this goal, violence prevention activities are being provided by Family Life Centers at 24 colleges and universities in 17 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Each of the Centers conducts its activities based on the FCVP Model of four program components: academic development, personal development, cultural and recreational enrichment, and career development.

Academic Development

The academic development component facilitates the enhancement of cognitive skills, critical thinking, and scholarship to promote self-esteem and the achievement of a higher quality of life.

Personal Development

The personal development component provides a series of activities which promote social, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being for the individual and which promote family bonding.

Cultural and Recreational Enrichment

The cultural and recreational component provides activities that promote an awareness and appreciation of one's heritage, traditions, values, and norms as well as those of other diverse populations and secondly, to provide activities that expose individuals and groups to the creative expression of various ethnic and cultural groups.

Career Development

The career development component facilitates activities which promote self-sufficiency through educational goal setting and the development of skills to enhance future marketability and career options.

Since the cooperative agreement was formalized in September 1994 between CSU and OMH, the program has provided violence prevention services to some 7,300 community youth and 3,200 college students. Additionally, during the first three years of the program, research data were collected on more than 550 community youth and almost 6,000 college students. Several scholarly papers, monographs, and reports have been published, and evaluation from the program has been presented at national and international violence prevention conferences.

The FCVP Program also conducts a biennial National Conference on Family and Community Violence Prevention designed for educators, social service providers, health care practitioners, criminal justice professionals, community participants, and others interested in serving youth and their families, particularly in racial/ethnic minority populations who are at risk for violent and abusive behavior.

FCVP membership for the 2000–2001 program year includes 24 Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Native American Tribal Colleges, Hispanic Serving Institutions and other Minority Serving Institutions with diverse enrollments serving the Asian/Pacific Islander, African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American communities.

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